NOTE VIII.

ON MERULA JAVANICA AND ITS NEAREST ALLIES

BY

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When occasionally looking over the Malayan specimens of the genus *Merula* in the Leyden Museum, my attention was drawn by a probably new bird from Celebes, which shows a very strong relationship to *M. javanica* (Horsf.) and *M. schlegeli* (Sclat.). Mr. Seebohm, in his Catalogue of the Turdidae in the British Museum, united *M. schlegeli* with *M. javanica*, though the distinguishing characters, pointed to by Dr. Sclater, are striking enough to have it recognized as an undoubtedly valid species. As Dr. Sharpe described another species from Borneo, we will have to deal, at present, with the following four species of this group:

1. *Merula javanica.*

Turdus javanicus Horsf. Trans. Linn. Soc. XIII, p. 148 (1822); Sclat. Ibis 1861, p. 280; id. 1875, p. 344, pl. 8; Seebohm, Cat. Birds Br. Mus. V, p. 279 (partim).
Turdus fumidus S. Müll. Verh. Land- en Volkenk. p. 201 (1839).
Turdus hypopyrrhus Hartl. Verz. Brem. Samml. p. 43 (1844).

This species is represented in the Leyden Museum by 1° an adult female from Java (Mount Gedeh, 8000'), the type of Müller's *Turdus fumidus;* 2° an unsexed adult specimen, obtained in 1860 in Java, and 3° an immature specimen from Java.

Both our adult birds have the upper surface, as well as the entire head, neck, throat, chest, upper breast, under wing-coverts and thighs dark olive-brown, somewhat paler brown on fore-neck and chest, and darker brown on head, quills and tail-feathers; lower breast, abdomen and flanks pale chestnut, centre of abdomen and vent white, under tail-coverts olive-brown, all the feathers more or less broadly streaked with white along the centres, sides of rump with hidden white subterminal markings on some of the feathers. Bill, feet and claws yellow.

The immature specimen differs from the adult in having whitish shaft-streaks on some feathers of the upper surface and still more on throat and chest, and in the lower breast, abdomen and flanks being uniform with throat and chest instead of pale chestnut brown. These parts are, however, intermixed with some chestnut feathers, showing the color of the adult stage. The vent and under tail-coverts do not differ in color from these parts in the adult birds.

Blyth, in J. A. S. Beng. XVI, p. 143, and after him Salvadori, Ucc. di Borneo, p. 257, and Seebohm in his above cited Catalogue of Turdidae, mention *Turdus concolor* Temm., but Temminck has never published nor is to be found in our Museum any manuscript-name like this in connection with *Turdus javanicus.*

As the habitats of this species are mentioned the Islands of Java, Sumatra and Borneo. I doubt, however, whether any specimen ever has been found in Sumatra, which island is mentioned by Bonaparte in his Conspectus Avium and after him by Gray and later authorities, without mentioning a specimen seen by themselves. The same I might say of Borneo, if there was not enumerated a specimen from that island by Seebohm in his above mentioned Catalogue, but having no special trustworthy statement of its origin, it is not out of doubt whether it is really obtained in Borneo.

2. *Merula seebohmi.*

Merula seebohmi Sharpe, Ibis 1888, p. 386; id. 1889, p. 267.

Similar to *M. javanica*, but general color black instead of olive-brown.

Discovered on the Kina Balu, Borneo, at a height of 8—9000 feet.

3. *Merula celebensis*, n. sp.

Very closely allied to *M. javanica*, but more olive-green instead of brown on back, rump, upper tail-coverts, upper wing-coverts and scapulars, the chestnut color on the under surface richer and reaching higher, covering the whole breast, and the white subterminal spots on the sides of the rump much larger and more numerous. The color of the head seems to me to indicate a stage of nonage, being pale earthy brown and showing narrow pale shaft-streaks and fulvous subterminal spots. A single specimen collected by Teysmann at Macassar in 1877.

4. *Merula schlegeli.*

Turdus fumidus (partim) S. Müller, Verh. Land- en Volkenk. p. 201.
Turdus schlegeli Sclat. Ibis 1861, p. 280; Wall. P. Z. S. 1863, p. 485; Sclat. Ibis 1875, p. 347.
Merula javanica (partim) Seebohm, Cat. Birds Br. Mus. V. p. 279.

This species is easily distinguished from *M. javanica* by the paler color, especially of head, neck, throat and chest, by the vent and centre of abdomen being chestnut instead of white, and by the want of white shaft-streaks on the under tail-coverts.

Adult male (type of the species): Mantle, back, rump and upper tail-coverts pale olive-brown, wing-coverts and outer edge of the secondaries like the back, quills and tail-feathers sepia-brown, entire head, hind neck, sides of neck, chin, throat, chest, upper breast and under wing-coverts and thighs, pale dirty grayish brown, somewhat darker on crown and hind neck; lower breast, abdomen, vent and flanks intensely chestnut-brown, under tail-coverts olive-brown like the upper, margined with the color of the abdomen, without white shaft-streaks. Bill, feet and claws yellow.

The typical specimen, which I believe to be fully adult, is the only representative of this species in our Museum; it has been obtained by S. Müller in the Penpaan valley in the mountainous interior of Timor.

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